

Make your own Compost

HOW TO GUIDE

*Recycle today for
a better tomorrow...*

 **RANGITĪKEI**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Making this place home.



Make your own compost!

Composting helps to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in our landfill. Composting is super kind on the environment and ensures less methane (a powerful greenhouse gas) is released into our atmosphere.

Going hand-in-hand with helping save the planet, compost (especially the homemade variety) is a garden super-food – greatly improving the overall quality of your home soil. Simply sprinkle a little on the surface of the soil, or work it into the ground before planting and watch your home garden thank you a-plenty.



How to compost

Our recipe for success

Compost thrives on the organic material in your home, such as food scraps and grass clippings from your yard.

For a thriving compost bin that will serve your home for years to come, all you need are three basic ingredients:



Browns – dried leaves, twigs, newspaper, cardboard, or even egg cartons



Greens – organic food scraps like vegetables and fruits, as well as those trusty grass clippings



Water – The elixir of life. Watering your compost helps the organic material break down.

Like all good things, it takes a little art – and a little science

Knowing what to feed your compost to get the right balance of ingredients is super important to a thriving system.

Microorganisms live in your compost to help break down (decompose) the organic material.

- More **brown** materials mean more carbon (*aka energy*) for these microorganisms – i.e. breaking down the material faster.
- More **green** materials mean more nitrogen (*aka compost food*) for a supercharged, good quality compost.
- You need both in beautiful harmony for a good compost. The C:N ratio (Carbon: Nitrogen) should be maintained at 25-30%:1 for a good compost – if organic materials aren't breaking down fast enough (i.e. you can see or smell mould/rotting food), add more **brown** material!

Make your own compost!

Compost Dos and Don'ts

Vegetables/
Vegetable Peel



Fruit/fruit peel



Egg shells



Coffee grounds



While water is important, your compost doesn't need a daily water. **Watering too often will create swamp rather than soil.**

Grass clippings



Cardboard & newspaper



Farm manure



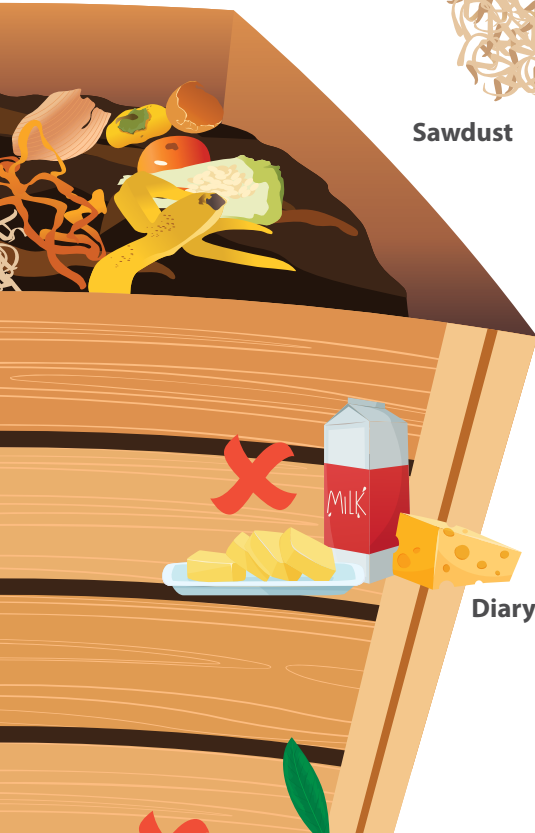
Brown leaves



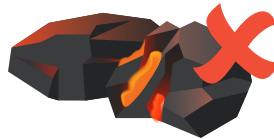
Sawdust



Make sure you turn your compost regularly.
Turning lets air in – another elements that helps with speedy decomposition.



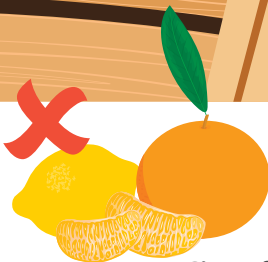
Weeds



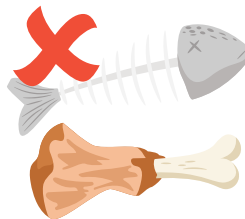
Ash/Coal



Garlic and Tomatoes



Citrus fruits



Meat/bones and Seafood



















Choosing a compost bin

If you're using a store-bought compost bin, here's an easy step-by-step for setting it up:

- 1. Put your bin in a warm and easily accessible spot in your garden.**
On bare soil or grass, with good drainage is best. Your compost bin will probably have anchor points on the bottom - be sure to press these firmly into the ground to make it as stable as possible.
- 2. Add your organic material** – you'll want an equal amount of **brown** and **green** materials. You can also add some lime or compost maker to give your compost an extra boost.
- 3. Add some water.**
- 4. Mix/turn your compost regularly** to let air in.
- 5. If wiggly friends come to say hi, that means you're doing a great job!**
Worms and other small insects are compost-helpers. If you start noticing lots of flies around, consider adding more **brown** material – you might have some food rotting.

A store-bought compost isn't the only solution. Lots of people DIY their compost bin out of free pallets. **Simply secure four together and you're ready to rumble!**

Compost Dos and Don'ts

Dos	Don'ts
 Vegetables - try avoid onions/garlic as these are very acidic.	 Weeds - they're weeds for a reason, don't let them root and take over your compost.
 Fruit/fruit peel (limit citrus!)	 Ash/coal - can contain nasty chemicals and throws off that art/science PH balance you've worked so hard for.
 Brown leaves	 Citrus fruits
 Farm manure (pig, chicken, sheep, goat, horse, cow) - this helps speed up the composting process. Avoid dog and cat manure	 Garlic and Tomatos - may increase the acidity of your compost and kill your worms.
 Grass clippings - make sure you mix these in. Grass clippings can get slimy and matted down, restricting air from your compost.	 Seafood - nobody that you want living in your compost likes fishy smell.
 Cardboard & newspaper - brown material!	 Meat/bones - remember your compost is a vegetarian!
 Dirty/wastewater - remember, try not to overwater your compost.	 Diary - can attract pests.
 Coffee grounds	
 Egg shells - if you crush these up, they break down quicker.	
 Sawdust - super high in carbon and is good to balance the nitrogen in your compost.	



www.rangitikei.govt.nz

P 06 327 0099 | 0800 422 522 (24 hrs)

E info@rangitikei.govt.nz

46 High Street, Private Bag 1102, Marton 4741

Making this place home.